National Child Care Information Center

A service of the Child Care Bureau

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QUALITY RATING SYSTEMS PLANNING TOOL:
STANDARDS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Categories of Standards	Center-Based Programs				
	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria[1]	Federal Head Start Performance Standards[2]	State Prekindergarten Requirements *Completed by State*	State Child Care Licensing Regulations *Completed by State*	Other State Program Standards (i.e., Voluntary Preschool Standards, Early Learning Guidelines, etc.) *Completed by State*
Maximum Child:Staff Ratios					
• Infants	4:1 – birth–15 months[3]	4:1			
• Toddlers	4:1 – 12–28 months[3] 6:1 – 21–36 months[3]	4:1			
• Preschool-Age Children	10:1 – 2.5–5 years old[3]	8.5:1 – 3-year-olds 10:1 – 4-year-olds			
Maximum Group Size					
• Infants	8 – birth–15 months[3]	8			
• Toddlers	12 – 12–36 months[3]	8			

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• **Preschool-Age Children**	20 – 2.5–5 years old[3]	17 – 3-year-olds 20 – 4-year-olds			
Minimum Teacher Qualifications					
	By 2006, all teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate credential (CDA) or equivalent. All teachers have or are working on an Associate's or Bachelor's degree or equivalent.	Each classroom must have one teacher with at least a CDA credential or a college degree with a specialization in early childhood education.			

Notes:
[1] **Source:** *Final Draft Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria,* National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Available on the Web at http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/next_era.asp#standards. Additional information about NAEYC accreditation is available on the Web at http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/.

[2] **Sources for ratios and group size:** *Title 45 Public Welfare, Chapter XIII Office of Human Development Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Part 1304 Program Performance Standards for the Operation of Head Start Programs by Grantee and Delegate Agencies* and *Part 1306 Head Start Staffing Requirements and Program Options.* Available on the Web at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/performance/index.htm.
Source for teacher qualifications: *Head Start Act, Section 648A, Staff Qualifications and Development.* Available on the Web at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/budget/headstartact.htm.

[3] NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Performance Criteria define multiple child:staff ratio requirements for the age groups depending on the group size. For example, a group size of 6 infants requires a child:staff ratio of 3:1, while a group size of 8 infants requires a child:staff ratio of 4:1. The maximum requirements are included in this table. A Group Size and Ratio Chart defining all of the variations is available on NAEYC's Web site at http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/naeyc_accred/draft_standards/defs/groupsize.html.